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83

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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

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State Dept. review completed

Hungarian on MBFR

Although Budapest has not yet officially answered its MBFR invitation, it seems clear that Hungary plans to participate in the talks. A foreign ministry official, speaking to Ambassador Puhon on 1 December would say only that Budapest's decision was "being concerted with the other Warsaw Pact countries" (read Soviet Union) and that the final decision could be expected "some time this month." In Helsinki, however, a working-level expert, talking with members of the US delegation at the CSCE preparatory talks, took it for granted, without being asked, that Hungary would be present at the initial talks on 31 January.

Janos Petran, who has participated in disarmament matters since at least 1969 and claims to have personally followed MBFR developments "since the Reykjavik declaration," asserted that Budapest had been giving MBFR "close attention for some time." Addressing himself to the format and agenda of the initial talks, Petran, who expects to be a member of the Hungarian delegation, thought that the formal sessions should cover procedural matters, including the agenda for the subsequent conference, and that informal contacts could broach substantive matters. In the latter context, he was especially concerned that there be movement toward a "common vocabulary," and cited as an example the definition of the reduction area. Petran evidently was not bothered by the phrase "MBFR," a term that he voiced in his excellent English without a trace of hesitation. The Hungarian thought the participation of observers might be a "problem," implying that the difficulty on the Warsaw Pact side was Romania.

As to further details, Petran plumped for alphabetical seating, use of the English and the Russian languages, and a secretariat, possibly to be provided by the host country. He readily agreed, that such questions could be taken up in diplomatic channels before the talks, and said he would propose that a Hungarian suggestion along these lines be included in its reply to the MBFR invitation.

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New Yugoslav Foreign Minister Nominated

Belgrade Tanjug announced today that Milos Minic, a 58 year old Serbian party and government functionary, has been nominated to take over the foreign affairs portfolio vacated by Mirko Tepavac in October. Minic is also slated to become the third vice-president on the federal executive council

In selecting Minic, Tito has chosen a loyal old comrade-in-arms who has no special background in foreign affairs but who will do exactly as he is told. Biographic information on Minic reads like a short history of the party line of the LCY. He joined the party in 1936, fought throughout the war as an underground partisan organizer, took part in the creation of the new state--including service as prosecutor at the trial of Draza Mihajlovic, the leader of the anti-Communist partisans--and in the early sixties worked his way into a top federal office, vice-president of the executive council. From 1965 to 1967 Minic served as a central committee commission chief and in 1966 came out in support of Tito's purge of Rankovic. Minic then participated in Tito's attempt to heal rifts in the Serb regime but was eased from prominence by ex-party boss Nikezic in 1969. Since then he has been one of five vice-presidents on the federal assembly. He reportedly has a good command of English.

One of Minic's first tasks may well be to improve the morale and discipline in the ministry. The resignation of Tepavac and long standing doubts about Tito's decision to pursue improved relations with Moscow have caused in-house grumbling. Moreover, lack of leadership during the interim seems to have reduced effectiveness. At the CSCE preparatory talks in Helsinki, for example, the Yugoslav delegation has been eclipsed by its Romanian counterpart in presenting strong positions on the rights of small countries. Minic will be fully approved by mid-December and will probably waste no time taking charge.

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Polish and East German Premiers Meet

Polish Premier Jaroszewicz and East German Premier Stoph met in Poznan on November 30th to discuss matters of mutual concern. The primary purpose undoubtedly was to iron out problems arising from the recent decision by Warsaw to limit the amount of East German marks which a Polish tourist may purchase--an action which significantly curtails Polish spending and, to a lesser extent, tourism in East Germany.

The Polish press on 1 December said that the meeting confirmed the correctness of the "open border" policy and that both sides would strive to continue this policy on the basis of "mutually established principles." Difficulties arising from differences in retail prices and deficits in balance of payments, the press added, were "understandable," but not of central importance.

25X1 Polish leaders, apparently realizing they may have a tiger by the tail in this issue, are doing their best to assure the populace that only financial considerations are being affected. The borders will remain open indefinitely, they stress, and the new policy of relatively free travel will continue.



25X1 NOTE : THE VIEWS EXPRESSED ABOVE REPRESENT ONLY THE ANALYSIS OF THE EE BRANCH